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Personality types of actuaries and accountants

Little is known about the personality types of actuaries: the sole published study profiled North American actuaries using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. In contrast, a number of studies of accountants have shown a clear and consistent dominance of certain personality preferences, with some authors expressing concern about the implied narrowness of the accounting profession and the possible lack of certain valued skills such as strategic thinking and persuasive communication.

This presentation will review what is known of the personality types of actuaries and will contrast the profiles of actuaries and accountants. First results from a 2009 survey of first-year Macquarie University actuarial students will also be presented, and links will be drawn between personality type, satisfaction with the actuarial program and reasons for choosing an actuarial major. Implications for teaching and learning in actuarial studies and accounting, and for the actuarial profession, will be highlighted.